

very good - generally correct

An

Inaugural dissertation

On

Pneumonia Syphilitica.

by

Charles R. Vancey

of

North Carolina

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syphilis

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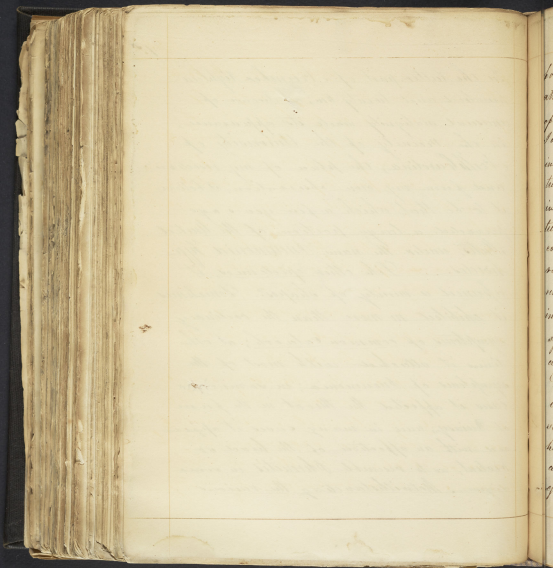
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1825

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1852

In the latter part of November eighteen hundred and twenty two; an disease of unusual malignity made its appearance, in the vicinity of the University of North Carolina; the place of my residence, and from my own observation, I believe it to be that, which a few years ago pervaded a large portion of the United States, under the name PNEUMONIC Typhoides. — Like other epidemics, it assumed a variety of shapes: — Sometimes it exhibited no more than the ordinary symptoms of common catarrh; at other times it attacked with most of the symptoms of Pneumonia; in some instances it affected the throat in the form of Quinsy; and in many cases it appeared with an affection of the head so violent, as to resemble Phrenitis in some degree. Notwithstanding the various



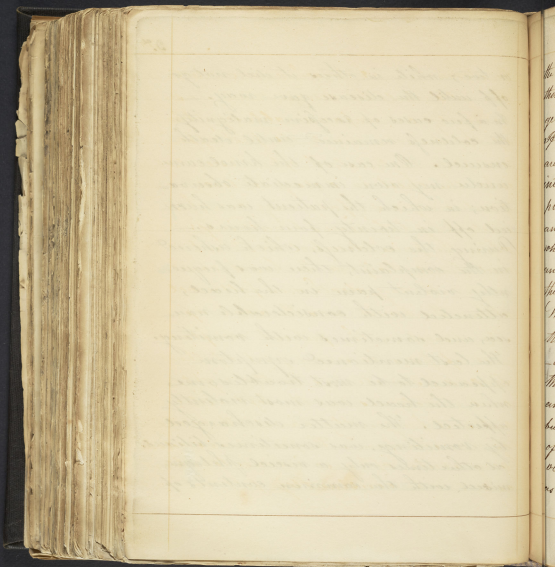
forms in which it appeared, the form attending was in a large majority of cases a species of typhus; at least I am confident that few cases occurred, in which the antiphlogistic plan of treatment, was for any time persisted in without manifest injury to the patient. On the other hand it may be confidently asserted, that no class of remedies except those, calculated to remove debility, or counteract the evils incident to a typhous condition of the system, could be relied on as decidedly and ultimately beneficial.

Whatever form the disease assumed, it generally commenced with a chill, succeeded by alternate sensations of heat and cold, and accompanied with a sense of general debility; the chills in some cases, continuing for a day

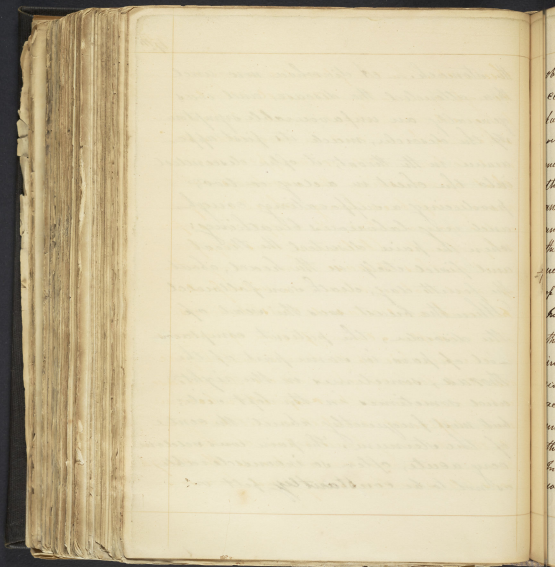
or two; while in others it did not go off until the disease gave way.

In a few cases of excessive malignity, the coldness remained until death ensued. One case of the kind came under my own immediate observation; in which the patient was hurried off in twenty four hours. — During the coldness, which ushered in the complaint, there was frequently violent pain in the head, attended with considerable nausea, and sometimes with vomiting.

The last mentioned symptom appeared to be most troublesome, when the head was most violently affected. The matter discharged by vomiting, was sometimes bilious, at other times only a viscid phlegm, mixed with the common contents of



the stomach. — A diarrhoea now and then attended the disease, and was generally an unfavourable symptom. At the disorder, much its first appearance in the throat; it often descended into the chest in a day or two, producing a suffocating cough, and very laborious breathing; when the pain deserted the throat and fixed itself in the head, about the fourth day, death soon followed. When the breast was the seat of the disorder, the patient complained of pain in some part of the thorax, sometimes in the right, and sometimes in the left sides; but most frequently about the centre of the sternum. The pain was seldom very acute, often so inconsiderable, as not to be constantly felt or



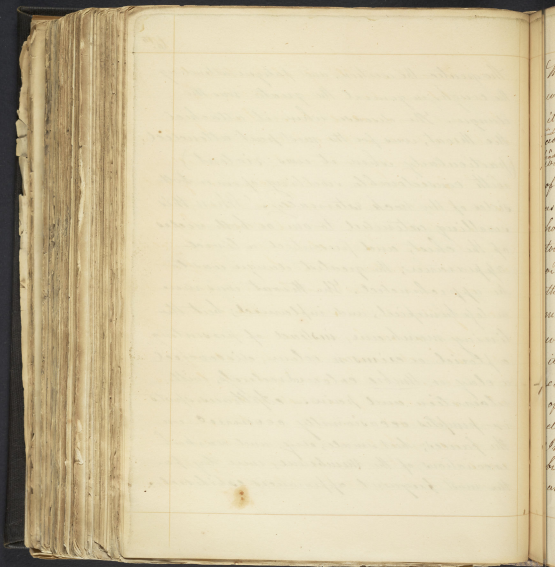
observed. In the pleuritic form, a cough generally attended, which fatigued the patient much without relieving him; and in most cases seemed to have little or no effect, except that of increasing the shortness and anxiety of breathing, which incessantly aggravated the sufferings of the patient. Delirium was less frequent in this disease, than in any other of equal violence I have ever witnessed.

In weak and relaxed constitutions,

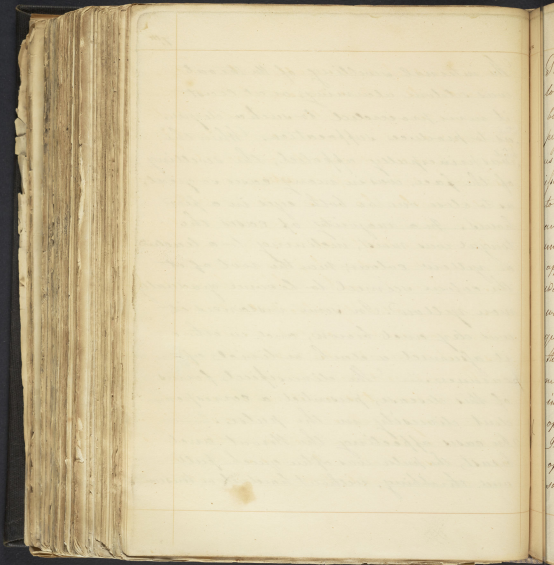
there was often a large effusion of mucous in the bronchie of the lungs, which gave rise to a loose cough, and as the disease advanced, and the respiration became more difficult created a rattling in the throat many hours before death.

In more vigorous constitutions the cough was less, sometimes dry and hoarse.

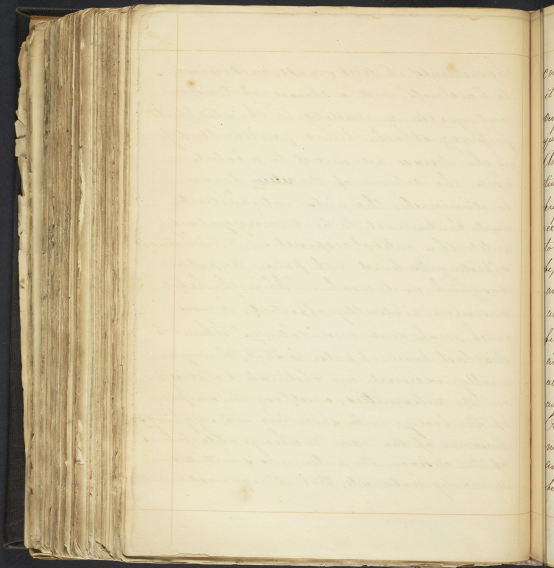
The greater the exertion, and fatigue, attending the cough, in general the greater was the danger. The disease when it attacked the throat, was for the most part attended, (particularly when it was violent) with considerable swelling of one or both sides of the neck externally. When this swelling extended to one or both sides of the chest, and presented a livid appearance; the greatest danger was to be apprehended. The throat was more or less tumefied, and inflamed; but the lining membrane, instead of presenting a florid or crimson colour, discovered a clay or murre coloured redness, with ulceration and pain. Aphthous spots or pimples occasionally occurred on the fauces; but small, dry, and darkish excoriations of the Membrane, were by far the most frequent appearances exhibited.



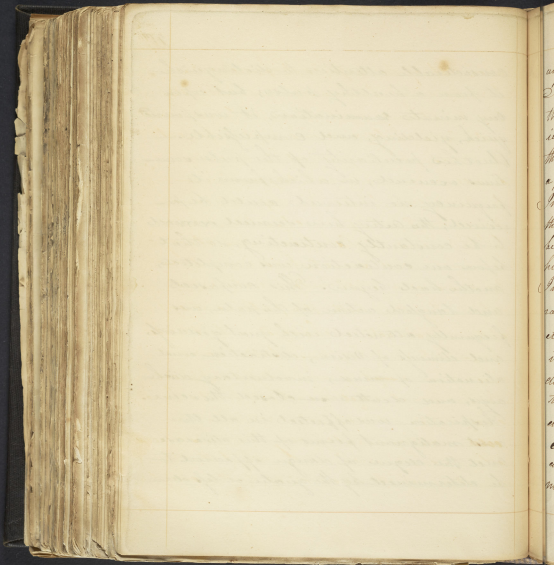
The internal swelling of the throat was seldom alarming; or at least it never proceeded to such a degree, as to produce suppuration. When the ^{head} ~~head~~ was principally affected, the swelling of the face, was in many cases so great, as to close one or both eyes in a few hours. In a majority of cases the tongue was moist, inclining to a leucous or yellow colour; near the root of it the colour seemed to become gradually more yellow. In some instances it was dry and brown, and in others it assumed a dark or livid appearance. — The diversified forms of this disease, presented a correspondent diversity in the pulse. — In cases affecting the throat and breast, the pulse was often quick full and throbbing, without hardness or tension.



Sometimes it was small, inclining
to hardness, with a thread of tension;
but yielding readily to the slightest
pressure; at other times, particularly
as the disease advanced to a fatal
issue, the volume of the ~~artery~~ began
to diminish, the pulse intermitted,
and continued to beat irregularly,
until the patient expired. — In cases
affecting the head with pain, the pulse
was quick and weak. When the head
was more violently affected, it was
quick, weak, and undulating. When
this last kind of pulse existed, there ge-
nerally occurred an obstinate coldness
in the extremities, and on the surface
of the body; with shivering and sighing.
In some of the more manageable forms
of the disease, the pulse was sometimes
so nearly natural, that it required.



considerable attention to distinguish it from a healthy pulse; but upon very minute examination, it was found quick, yielding, and compressible.— Another peculiarity of the pulse sometimes occurred, in which from its frequency no interval could be perceived; the artery here seemed ~~seemed~~ to be constantly contracting, so that before one contraction was completed, another had begun. This confused and tangled action of the pulse, was frequently attended with great giddiness, and dimness of vision, distraction and alienation of mind, involuntary discharges, and death soon closed the scene. Respiration was affected in all the most malignant forms of this disease and the degree of danger appeared to be determined by the greater or less de-

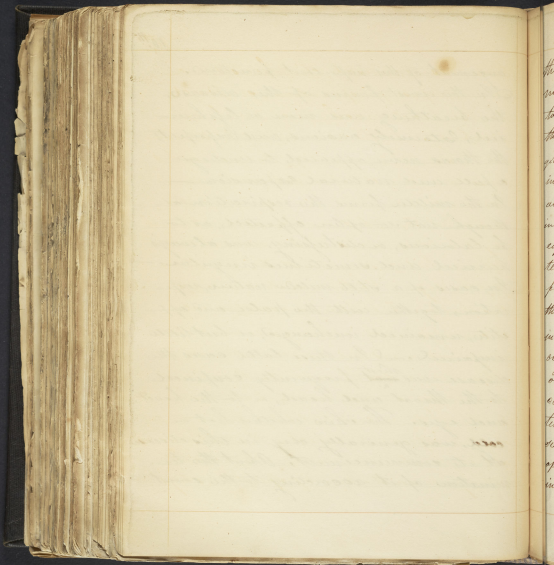


angement of this important functions.

In the worst forms of this disease, the breathing was more or less hurried, extremely anxious, and imperfect; the thorax never appeared to undergo a full and natural expansion—

In the milder forms the respiration although not so often affected, as to be labious, or distressing, was always hurried and sometimes irregular.

In cases of a still milder nature, respiration, together with the pulse and appetite, remained unchanged, or but little impaired. — In these latter cases the disease was ~~not~~^{most} frequently confined to the throat and head, or to the head and eyes. The skin whether hot or cold, was generally dry in this disease at its commencement. — About the termination of it according to the event



there was universal diaphoresis, or a more profuse perspiration, confined to the head, neck, and trunk of the body. — The urine was but little changed in colour, in quantity it was somewhat increased. — The duration of the disease was always uncertain, it often proved fatal in a short time, but some cases continued eight or nine days; most commonly it terminated fatally about the fourth or fifth day. — Of the remote cause of this disease, but little is ascertained; in common with other epidemics, its origin is involved in doubt and obscurity. — As it regards the exciting causes, they consist in whatever has a tendency to induce debility of the system; such as exposure to sudden transitions of temperature, errors in diet, excessive indulgence in the use of spirituous liquors.

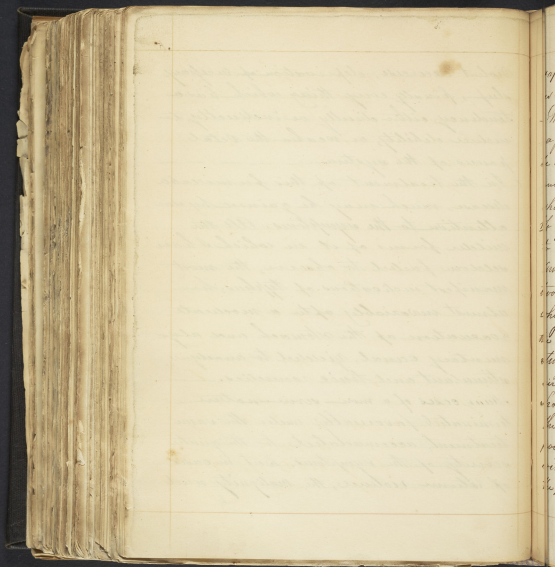
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Violent exercise, deprivation of necessary sleep, finally every thing which has a tendency, either directly or indirectly, to induce debility, or weaken the vital powers of the system.

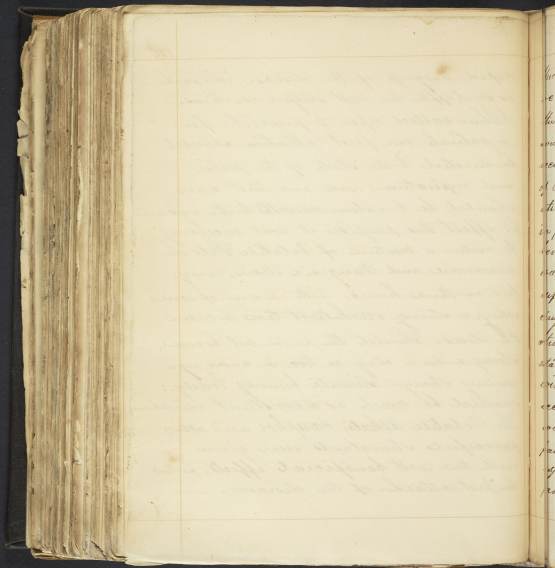
In the treatment of this formidable disease, much may be gained by due attention to the symptoms. All the milder forms of it in which I have seldom failed to observe, the most manifest indications of typhus, have almost invariably after a moderate evacuation of the stomach and alimentary canal, yielded to anodyne stimulant and tonic remedies.

Many cases of a more severe nature terminated favourably under the same treatment, accommodated to the greater severity of the symptoms. But in cases of extreme violence, the malignity and

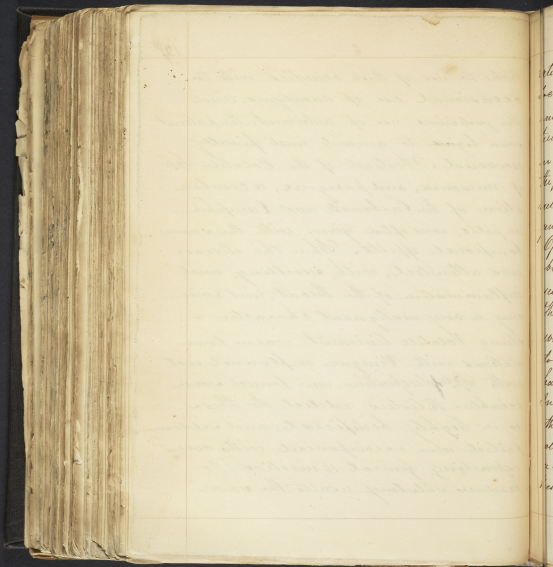


rapid progress of the disease, was such
as to baffle the most skillful cautions.

When called upon to prescribe for
a patient, our first attention should
be directed to the state of the pulse,
and respiration, and our first care
should be to restore warmth to the system.
To effect this purpose it was necessary
to order a mixture of Volatile Eff. of
Ammonia and Sanger's Elixir, every
two or three hours, with a cup of wine
or a strong snake-root tea between
the doses. Should the pulse not become
stronger in a day or two, in cases re-
quiring stronger stimuli bledlety
should be used as a constant drain.
The Volatile Alkali camphor and other
powerful stimulants were given
with the most beneficial effects, from
the first attack of the disease.



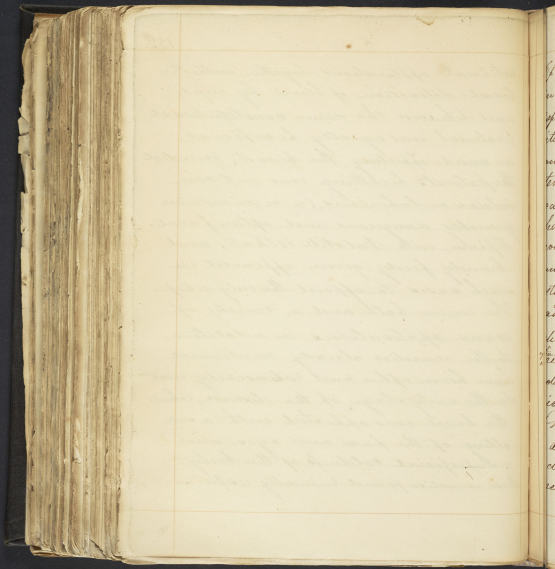
Such the use of these remedies with the
 occasional use of anodynes, and
 the judicious use of nutriment, the patient
 soon began to amend and finally
 recovered. Instead of the Volatile Spts
 of Ammonia, and paregoric, a combina-
 tion of the Carbonate and Camphor
 in pills, was often given with the same
 beneficial effects. When the disease
 was attended, with swelling and
 inflammation of the throat, not evin-
 cing a very malignant character; a
 strong Volatile Liniment, warm fomen-
 tations with Vinegar, or flannel wet
 with Spiritus Sassafras, were found use-
 ful. Blisters added to these
 were highly beneficial; and seldom
 failed when accompanied with con-
 sponding general remedial. To
 produce salutary results the same



15th

retinal applications, together with the local detraction of blood by cups, and likewise the same constitutional treatment was equally beneficial in cases affecting the breast; provided the patient's breathing was not convulsive or laborious, (a circumstance generally dangerous and often fatal.

Opium with Volatile Alkali, and brandy freely given appeared in such cases to afford the only relief. The warm bath, and a variety of warm applications in addition to the remedies already mentioned have been often and extensively used. In the early stage of the disease, when the head was affected with a swelling of the face and eyes, and a superficial coldness of the body; these remedies proved eminently useful. -



Of the advantage of general bleeding
in this disease, I have had but little
experience. In the hands of some practi-
tioners I have reason to believe it pro-
ved mischievous. Owing to the great
tendency to syncope, purging when
carried to any extent, often proved
harmful, and even fatal. Emetics
were by far more clearly indicated,
and were resorted to in the early
stage of the disease, with singular
advantage. The larger portion of
diaphoretics and expectorants were
^{often} resorted to, in vain, ~~but~~ if
diaphoresis was induced the happi-
est results were anticipated —
Though whenever ^{our} attempts to bring
on easy expectoration and natural
diaphoresis, and implicitly
rely on such common auxiliaries

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will often be disappointed. —
They must be preceded by medi-
cines calculated to sustain the
vascular action and excitement
of the system.

